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# The Preface and Subject Matter of Cyril of Alexandria’s *De Adoratione*

In 1989 Matthieu-Georges de Durand pointed out the existence of a preface or introductory note to Cyril of Alexandria’s treatise *De adoratione et cultu in spiritu et veritate*, which is preserved in a manuscript in the Bodleian, but not included in the edition of the text printed in *Patrologia Graeca*.<sup>1</sup> However, subsequent scholarship on Cyril, including even studies specifically focused on *De adoratione*, have ignored de Durand’s find.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, this preface is absent from Cyril’s corpus both in the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* as well as in the most recent supplements to *Clavis Patrum Graecorum*.<sup>3</sup> In this note I would like to highlight once again this preface so that future studies of *De adoratione* may take into account its significance for interpreting the treatise. Furthermore, I intend also to draw attention to the existence of the same passage in a Syriac manuscript apparently unknown to de Durand, which provides further confirmation for the Greek text found in the Bodleian manuscript. Finally, I will comment upon how this preface aids us in identifying the intention behind the treatise, as well as its place in Cyril’s exegetical corpus.

The most recent printed edition of Cyril’s *De adoratione* is that found in *Patrologia Graeca*, published in 1864. However, the version of the text printed in PG is merely a reprint of the

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1. “Un prologue inédit au *De adoratione* de Cyrille d’Alexandrie?” *Studia Patristica* 20 (Leuven: Peeters, 1989), 3-7.
  2. Cf. the absence of his article in the bibliographies in Marie-Odile Boulnois, *Le paradoxe trinitaire chez Cyrille d’Alexandrie: Hermeneutique, analyses philosophiques et argumentation théologique*, Collection des études augustinienes, Serie Antiquite 143 (Paris: Institut d’études augustinienes, 1994); Bernard Meunier, *Le Christ de Cyrille d’Alexandrie: L’humanité, le salut, et la question monophysite*, Théologie historique 104 (Paris: Beauchesne, 1997); Norman Russell, *Cyril of Alexandria, The Early Church Fathers* (London: Routledge, 2000); John McGuckin, *Saint Cyril of Alexandria and the Christological Controversy* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2004); Sebastian Schurig, *Die Theologie des Kreuzes beim frühen Cyrill von Alexandria: Dargestellt an seiner Schrift “De adoratione et cultu in spiritu et veritate”*, Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum 29 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005); B. Lee Blackburn, Jr., *The Mystery of the Synagogue: Cyril of Alexandria on the Law of Moses* (diss., University of Notre Dame, 2009); Hans van Loon, *The Dyophysite Christology of Cyril of Alexandria*, Supplements to *Vigiliae Christianae* 96 (Leiden: Brill, 2009).
  3. Maurice Geerard and Jacques Noret, *Clavis Patrum Graecorum, Supplementum* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1998); Jacques Noret, *Clavis Patrum Graecorum, Vol. III A, A Cyrillo Alexandrino ad Iohannem Damascenum, addenda volumini III* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003), §5200.

edition prepared by Jean Aubert, first published in 1638 in Paris and then reprinted in 1737.<sup>4</sup> Thus, it is something of an understatement to say that readers of *De adoratione* today are relying upon a dated text, and that a new critical edition is a *desideratum*.<sup>5</sup> Migne reports that Aubert took his Greek text from two sources, a manuscript from the library of Leiden and a manuscript belonging to Achille Harlay de Sancy, bishop of Saint-Malo in France who had previously served as the French ambassador to the Ottoman Empire and had there collected a number of manuscripts.<sup>6</sup> The former manuscript is Vulc. 025, currently held in Leiden and dated to 1583, and the latter is undoubtedly suppl. gr. 0150, a fourteenth-century manuscript now held at the Bibliothèque nationale of Paris. Vulc. 025 consists of the preparation for a critical edition by Vulcanius, and so takes into account several of the other witnesses known in the sixteenth century. However, the absence of a preface in Aubert’s edition indicates that neither he nor Vulcanius had any knowledge of the Bodleian manuscript. Moreover, other witnesses were unknown at the time, such as the remains of a sixth- or seventh-century manuscript recovered from the ruins of an Egyptian monastery.<sup>7</sup> Although de Durand was unable to collate all the manuscripts related to *De adoratione*, by relying on the notes to the early printed Latin translations, he concluded that none of the other witnesses, not even those in the same family as the Bodleian manuscript, preserve this preface.<sup>8</sup>

The Bodleian manuscript in question is catalogued as Cromwell 9, and is dated to around 1090. The first 271 pages preserve a selection of homilies and letters by Gregory of Nyssa, and

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4. The title page to the PG edition states that Migne is reprinting the second Paris edition (PG 68). For a listing of the older printed editions of Cyril’s corpus, see Joseph Kopallik, *Cyrillus von Alexandrien, eine Biographie nach den Quellen* (Mainz: F. Kirchheim, 1881), 369–75. Aubert’s editions appear as numbers 54 and 68 in Kopallik’s list.
  5. New critical editions of Cyril’s *De adoratione* and *Glaphyra* are planned as a part of the project “Alexandrinische und antiochenische Bibelexegese in der Spätantike” of the Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften, but the project is not expected to begin until 2018 and will not be completed until 2032. See <http://www.bbaw.de/forschung/bibelexegese/projekte> for more details.
  6. “Graeca Aubertus deprompsit e codice Vulcanii, quem bibliothecae Leidensi ille legaverat (c), et ex altero Harlaei, Macloviensis episcopi, cujus variae lectiones post notas in calce voluminis occurrunt” (PG 68.50).
  7. See Peter Sanz, “Neue Blätter des Dublin-Pariser Papyruskodex des Kyrillos von Alexandria,” in *Griechische literarische Papyri christlichen Inhaltes I* (Baden bei Wien: Rudolf M. Rohrer Verlag, 1946), 111–124.
  8. Thus, he suggested that it “dépend d’un hyparchétype qui s’est séparé encore plus tôt du reste de la tradition” (“Un prologue inédit,” 4). Barbara Villani, of the University of Zurich, is currently preparing an edition, translation, and commentary of book 1 of *De adoratione*, and she confirms that based on her research the Bodleian manuscript is alone in preserving the preface.

pages 272-683 preserve books 1-8 of *De adoratione*.<sup>9</sup> De Durand provided a transcription of the preface from Cromwell 9, but failed to note its preservation in a Syriac manuscript held by the British Library. In Wright’s nineteenth-century catalogue of the Syriac manuscripts held by the library, he highlighted the existence of a single vellum leaf dated to the sixth or seventh century, and, although it is catalogued as folio 39 of manuscript Add. 17,217, he suggested that it properly belongs to Add. 14,553, which preserves books 1-5 of *De adoratione*.<sup>10</sup> Thus, although Cromwell 9 is one of the earliest Greek witnesses to the treatise, this Syriac translation predates it by several centuries, and possibly takes us back to within half a century of Cyrils’ own lifetime.<sup>11</sup> In what follows I provide [my own transcriptions of the Greek and Syriac manuscripts](#), followed by an English translation.

Cromwell 9, page 272

προθεωρία<sup>12</sup>

τοῖς ὡς ἄριστα καὶ ὡς ἔνι μάλιστα θεοφιλῶς διαβιοῦν ἡρημένοις<sup>13</sup>, ἡθικὴν  
ὕψιγγον<sup>14</sup> συνθεῖναι προσηρημένους<sup>15</sup>, ὡς ἂν εἰδεῖεν εὖ μάλα τὴν εἰς πᾶν

9. On this manuscript, see H. O. Coxe, *Catalogi codicum manuscriptorum Bibliothecae Bodleianae. Pars prima, Recensionem codicum Graecorum continens* (Oxford: E Typographeo Academico, 1853), 427-29, and more recently Irmgard Hutter, *Corpus der Byzantinischen Miniaturenhandschriften, Band 3.1, Oxford Bodleian Library III, Textband, Denkmäler der Buchkunst, Bd. 5,1*, (Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann, 1982), 78-80. This is perhaps the manuscript that Migne had in mind when he wrote “Libri priores exstant Oxon. in cod. Barocc. n.291 Catal.” (PG 68.50), though it is unclear why he listed the manuscript as a part of the Barocci collection. Coxe’s catalogue lists the Barocci manuscripts just prior to the Cromwell manuscripts, but the Barocci collection only goes up to number 242. Furthermore, the preface in Cromwell 9 is not listed in P. Chrysostomus Baur, *Initia patrum graecorum*, 2 vols., *Studi e testi* 180-181 (Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1955).

10. See W. Wright, *Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum*, vol. 2 (London: 1870), 488-90.

11. On the Syriac translation of Cyril’s writings, see Daniel King, *The Syriac Versions of the Writings of Cyril of Alexandria: A Study in Translation Technique*, CSCO 626, Subsidia, 123 (Louvain: Peeters, 2008). His writings began to be translated into Syriac within his own lifetime.

12. This word is used also at the outset of the *Thesaurus*, prol. (PG 75.9), and also at the beginning of several festal letters (pasch. hom. 17 (W. H. Burns, Marie-Odile Boulnois, and Bernard Meunier, *Cyrille d’Alexandrie: Lettres festales XII-XVII*, Tome III, Sources Chrétiennes 434 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1998), 254); 18, 23, 28, 29 (PG 77.800, 873, 941, 957)).

13. There are two very similar passages elsewhere in Cyril’s corpus: οἷς ἐν φροντῖδι τὸ διαβιῶναι θεοφιλῶς (dial. Trin. III (461e) (Georges Matthieu de Durand, *Cyrille d’Alexandrie: Dialogues sur la Trinité*, Tome II, Sources Chrétiennes 237 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1977), 10)); τοὺς ἔτι μάλιστα θεοφιλῶς διαβιοῦν ἡρημένους, (hom. pasch. 19.3 (PG 77.829)).

14. The phrase ἡθικὴν ὑψιγγον shows up three other times in Cyril’s corpus. See Ps. 47:13 (PG 69.1068); graph. Ex. I (PG 69.385); pasch. hom. 27, prooem. (PG 77.941).

15. The text here reads *προσηρημένοι*, but I have emended it to *προσηρημένους*. See the discussion below.

ὅτι οὖν<sup>16</sup> τῶν τεθνασμένων ἵνα τρίβον, ὀρθῶς τε<sup>17</sup> καὶ ἀπλανῶς τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ πολιτείας ἀποπεραίνειν δύνασθαι<sup>18</sup> τὰ αὐχήματα<sup>19</sup>, καθήμι μὲν ἀναγκαίως τὸν λόγον ἐπὶ τὴν θεόπνευστον Γραφήν· ἐντολῆς δὲ τῆς διὰ Μωσέως τὰ βάθη διερευνώμενος<sup>20</sup>, ἐν βιβλίοις ἑπτακαίδεκα τὸ σύμπαν τῆς πραγματείας εἰργασμαι σῶμα. τῆς σῆς δ’ ἂν εἴη παγκάλῃς φρενὸς, ποθεινότατε<sup>21</sup> ἀδελφε, τὴν τῶν κεφαλαίων εὐρυθμον τηρῆσαι τάξιν καὶ προσώπων τῶν ἐξ ἀμοιβῆς ἀσυγχυτον τὴν διαφοράν. ἐπεὶ γὰρ ἀνάγκη λεπτοεπεῖν<sup>22</sup> καὶ ταῖς ἄγαν ἰσχυαῖς προσβάλλειν ἐννοίας<sup>23</sup>, διαπτύσσοντες<sup>24</sup> τοῦ νόμου τὴν σκιὰν καὶ εἰς ἐμφανεστέραν ἄγοντες γνῶσιν τὰ ὡς ἐν αἰνίγμασιν εἰρημένα, ταύτητοι καὶ χρεωδέστατα πρὸς πεῦσιν ὥσπερ ἡμῖν καὶ ἀπόκρισιν<sup>25</sup> τὸ εἶδος τοῦ λόγου συντίθεται καὶ ἔστιν ἀνεκμύνον. τὰ κεφάλαια τῆς πραγματείας . . .

Add. 17,217, folio 39

...ⲓⲁⲃⲁⲓ<sup>26</sup> ⲕⲁⲓⲱ ⲁⲓⲱⲓⲁⲃⲁ

16. The phrase εἰς πᾶν ὅτι οὖν is not found in any author prior to Cyril, but occurs ninety-three times in his corpus according to TLG. The phrase εἰς πᾶν ὅτι οὖν τῶν τεθνασμένων is found in the following passages: Soph. 1:4-6 (P. E. Pusey, Sancti patris nostri Cyrilli archiepiscopi Alexandrini in XII Prophetas, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1868), 2.176); Quod unus 754c (G. M. de Durand, Cyrille d’Alexandrie: Deux dialogues christologiques, Sources Chrétiennes 97 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1964), 434); ador. IV; XVI (PG 68.305; 1045); glaph. Gen. VII (PG 69.369).
17. I have here emended the text from γε to read τε. See the discussion below.
18. The original scribe wrote δύνανται and a later hand has corrected it to read δύνασθαι.
19. A similar passage occurs very early in the same treatise: τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ πολιτείας τὰ αὐχήματα (ador. I (PG 68.137)).
20. A similar construction (τὰ βάθη διερευνώμενος) occurs at Jo. 15:9-10 (P. E. Pusey, Sancti Patris nostri Cyrilli archiepiscopi Alexandrini in D. Ioannis Evangelium, 3 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1872), 2.569).
21. Cyril uses this same form in addressing Calosyrius (ep. 83 (Lionel R. Wickham, Cyril of Alexandria: Select Letters, Oxford Early Christian Texts (Oxford: Clarendon, 1983), 220)).
22. Cyril seems to have coined the term λεπτοεπέω. Cf. ador. XV (PG 68.993); dial. Trin. V (567a) (SC 237.328).
23. Cyril speaks elsewhere of ἰσχυαὶ ἐννοιαί. See, e.g., dial. Trin. VI (619a) (Georges Matthieu de Durand, Cyrille d’Alexandrie: Dialogues sur la Trinité, Tome III, Sources Chrétiennes 246 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1978), 104); Quod unus (776a) (SC 97.504); hom. pasch. 17.2 (SC 434.260); ador. VIII (PG 68.540); Is. 19:5-10 (PG 70.460).
24. A similar construction occurs at ador. VIII (PG 68.560): διαπτύξας τὴν σκιάν.
25. Cyril described his Dialogues on the Trinity as being an investigation κατὰ πεῦσιν καὶ ἀπόκρισιν (dial. Trin. I (384b) (Georges Matthieu de Durand, Cyrille d’Alexandrie: Dialogues sur la Trinité, Tome I, Sources Chrétiennes 231 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1976), 130)). Porphyry’s used the same description for his commentary on Aristotle’s categories (A. Busse, Porphyrii isagoge et in Aristotelis categorias commentarium, Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca 4.1 (Berlin: Reimer, 1887), 55).
26. The top left corner of the folio is gone, so several words are fragmentary or altogether missing. The text is unvocalized in the manuscript, so I have left it as such here. I have also omitted most of the

## Preface

The chapters of the treatise . . .

29. In order to mark the start of the chapter headings, this line is written in ink that is lighter than the rest of the text, as is also the enumeration in the margin beside the title of books 1 and 2. The ink for the main text is black, whereas this appears gray. Note that the scribe refers here to the “five” (~~quinque~~) books of *De adoratione* that he is copying in this volume, and indeed the surviving portions of ms. Add. 14,553 preserve five of the seventeen books of the treatise.

De Durand was convinced that the preface is authentic, even though it is not preserved in any other manuscripts, and I am persuaded that he was correct. The parallels with Cyril’s style that are highlighted in the footnotes above suffice to demonstrate Cyrilline authorship. Furthermore, as de Durand noted, nearly all of Cyril’s other major treatises have prefaces, and the absence of such an introduction in Migne’s edition of *De adoratione* is a striking departure from his typical pattern.<sup>30</sup> The addition of the early Syriac manuscript as a witness to this preface further confirms the accuracy of the text in Cromwell 9. Though much older, it is a fairly literal translation a Greek text similar to that found in Cromwell 9, although in a few instances the translator has slightly expanded Cyril’s difficult Greek, no doubt in order to serve the understanding of his Syriac readers.<sup>31</sup> Furthermore, the addition of the Syriac suggests at least two emendations to the Greek text. First, although the Greek text of Cromwell 9 reads *προηρημένοι*, which de Durand transcribed as *προηρημένους*, it is clear that a later scribe has written an omicron above the nu and drawn a vertical line between the original omicron and iota. The Greek text would make more sense if the reading were *προηρημένος*, and in fact this is the reading supported by the Syriac which has ܡܬܠܡܕܐ ܕܡܬܠܡܕܐ, an Ethpaal first-person singular. Second, the Greek text of Cromwell 9 reads *ὁρθῶς γε καὶ ἀπλανῶς* where we would more likely expect a *τε* rather than *γε*, as indeed this phrase occurs several other times in Cyril’s corpus.<sup>32</sup> Though *γε* might have simply been dropped out of the Syriac since it is only a minor particle, the fact that the Syriac joins the two adverbs with a simple conjunction (ܡܬܠܡܕܐ ܕܡܬܠܡܕܐ) and apparently does not translate the *γε* tacitly supports the emendation of *γε* to *τε*.

A further observation related to the Syriac text pertains to the list of chapter headings (*τὰ κεφάλαια τῆς πραγματείας*) that follows this preface. De Durand conjectured that this list, though representing Cyril’s original titles for the chapters or books, was only placed here at the

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30. For example, see Jo., praef. (Pusey, In D. Ioannis Evangelium, 1.1-7); Is., prooem. (PG 70.9-13); Os., praef. (Pusey, In XII Prophetas, 1.1-7); dial. Trin., prol. (383-384) (SC 231.126-28); glaph. Gen. I (PG 69.13-16); thes., prol. (PG 75.9-13); Juln., prol. (Paul Burguière and Pierre Éviéux, Cyrille d’Alexandrie: Contre Julien, Tome I, Sources Chrétiennes 322 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1985), 100-108); In Psalmos, prooem. (G. Mercati, Osservazioni a Proemi del Salterio di Origene, Ippolito, Eusebio, Cirillo Alessandrino e altri, con frammenti inediti, Studi e Testi 142 (Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1948), 140-44).

31. For example, *καὶ ἔστω ἀνεμμένον* (literally: “and is relaxed”) becomes ܡܬܠܡܕܐ ܕܡܬܠܡܕܐ (literally: “the purpose of whose reading is rest”). Similarly, the phrases ܡܬܠܡܕܐ ܕܡܬܠܡܕܐ and ܡܬܠܡܕܐ ܕܡܬܠܡܕܐ have no equivalent in the Greek, and are probably expansions by the Syriac translator of his original text.

32. See Jo. 14:18 (Pusey, In D. Ioannis Evangelium, 2.471); 2 Cor. 2:15ff (Pusey, In D. Ioannis Evangelium, 3.330); dial. Trin. IV (528e) (SC 237.212); Ps. 47:13 (PG 68.1068).

beginning of the treatise by a later copyist. Cyril himself, so de Durand argued, probably put the chapter titles only at the head of each chapter.<sup>33</sup> That the Syriac witness also contains this list suggests that if it was a copyist who inserted the chapter titles at the beginning of the treatise, then it must have occurred very early in the text’s transmission. This observation perhaps lends greater plausibility to the idea that Cyril himself affixed the list following the preface.

The most striking difference between the Greek and the Syriac versions of this preface is that, while the Greek addresses merely an anonymous “brother” (ἀδελφὲ), the Syriac appears to specify an individual. Rather than the Syriac word for “brother” (ܐܕܝܪܐ), the preface in *Add.* 17,217 reads ܡܠܟܐ. This otherwise puzzling word is best explained as an abbreviated form of the proper name “Palladius.” In his catalogue Wright cites the first line of the first surviving folio of *Add.* 14,553, and it is clear that the Syriac scribe used ܡܠܟܐ throughout the dialogue to mark the questions and answers of Palladius.<sup>34</sup> It is possible that either of these readings was the original one, but a scribal emendation from “brother” to “Palladius” seems more plausible than the alternative. Perhaps the Syriac translator assumed that the anonymous “brother” whom Cyril addresses in the preface was the same figure as his dialogue partner in the body of the work, and so substituted the proper name to remove the ambiguity inherent in the preface.

Moreover, it should be noted that de Durand also questioned whether or not this brief paragraph is truly a preface. He rightly points out its departure from Cyril’s other prefaces or prologues. It names no dedicatee, it is much shorter, it contains no citations from Scripture, no acknowledgement of the difficult task ahead or prayer for divine assistance, nor does it express an awareness of prior exegetes who have commented on the Pentateuch, all features that occur with greater or lesser frequency in Cyrilline prefaces. In light of these departures from the norm, de Durand suggested that what we have here is not a preface in the true sense of the word, but rather a note to the copyists to attend closely to the dialogue format so as to avoid confusion arising in the process of transcribing the text.<sup>35</sup> He further proposed that Cyril might have composed this preface only after some copies of the work had already been circulated, which might explain why it does not appear in the manuscript tradition aside from these two manuscripts. De Durand’s creative suggestion helps to explain some of the peculiar features of

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33. De Durand, “Un prologue inédit,” 6-7.

34. Wright, *Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts*, 490.

35. De Durand, “Un prologue inédit,” 5-7.



this paragraph, but in response we should note that if Cyril did originally dispatch this treatise without a preface, we are back to the situation in which nearly all of his other major works possess an introductory note to the readers except this one. Moreover, the description of this paragraph as a *προθεωρία* (Syriac: ܦܪܝܬܝܘܬܐ) further argues that it should be read as a legitimate prologue to Cyril’s work, albeit one that is noticeably different in certain respects from his other introductory notes.

Whether this *προθεωρία* is a proper introduction or simply a note to copyists, there is no doubt that it is the clearest statement we have from the author about his own work, and as such it aids us in defining Cyril’s intent in *De adoratione*, as well as in situating it among his other exegetical works. Since the seminal study of Robert Wilken in 1971, it has been commonplace to view the treatise as emerging from the tension experienced by Cyril as the leader of the *ascendant* Christian community in a city that was still home to a large Jewish population. Thus, for example, after rehearsing some of Cyril’s harshest statements about Judaism, Wilken writes, “The issues raised by his confrontation with Judaism provide [Cyril] with a setting for his exegesis of the Scriptures and the development of his theology.”<sup>36</sup> Further on Wilken writes, “by calling his commentary on the Pentateuch *Adoration in Spirit and in Truth* Cyril wished to demonstrate that the Jewish way of life had been superseded, the Jewish Scriptures had found their true interpretation, and a new way of life had been established. . . . The question of Christianity and Judaism formed the backdrop for Cyril’s interpretation of the Bible.”<sup>37</sup> On this account, Christians and Jews both laid claim to the Hebrew Scriptures as authoritative guides for their respective communities, and Cyril’s treatise functioned as an attempt to refute a Jewish reading of the Christian Old Testament, and simultaneously assert the right of Christians to appropriate these texts for their own purposes.

Wilken’s thesis has been influential. In his recent study of the theology of the cross in *De adoratione*, Sebastian Schurig notes that the polemic against the Jews is “meist fehlt” in the treatise, but nevertheless persists in placing the work against the backdrop of Cyril’s violent dispute with Jews in the early years of his episcopal reign.<sup>38</sup> Frances M. Young also agrees that the conflicts with the Jews served as “the setting against which these works were produced,”

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36. *Judaism and the Early Christian Mind* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971), 67.

37. *Ibid.*, 76-77.

38. *Die Theologie des Kreuzes*, 32. Schurig writes, “Das Werk *de adoratione* selbst liefert entsprechend seiner Thematik natürlich einen wichtigen Beitrag zu dieser Auseinandersetzung.”

though she notes that “they also provide considerable insight into Cyril’s basic understanding of humanity, sin, redemption, Christ, and the essentials of Christian practice”.<sup>39</sup> Norman Russell similarly concludes that “the ultimate purpose of the *Adoration* is to demonstrate the concordance of the two Testaments and to prove that the Christians, not the Jews, are the true heirs to the promises of God.”<sup>40</sup> Likewise the 2009 dissertation of B. Lee Blackburn continues this trend, highlighting Cyril’s argument that “a coherent and comprehensive indictment of post Christum Judaism is latent in the law itself.”<sup>41</sup> However, a different note was sounded in 2011 by Mark Elliott who argued that “this perception of an emphasis in *De adoratione* on OT-NT discontinuity is open to question.”<sup>42</sup> Elliott proposed that in the treatise Cyril evinces much greater respect for the Old Testament and sees greater continuity between the old and new than is suggested by these earlier studies. As Cyril himself states early in the work, in a sentence cited by both Wilken and Elliott, “the life in Christ is not greatly different from the way of life according to the law, if the ancient ordinances are given a spiritual interpretation.”<sup>43</sup> In light of this statement, Elliott emphasizes the positive role played by the law in Cyril’s exposition, and further suggests that the homily which concludes the treatise has to do with the monastic life.<sup>44</sup>

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39. *From Nicaea to Chalcedon: A Guide to the Literature and its Background*, 2nd ed. (London: SCM Press, 2010), 305-6.

40. Cyril of Alexandria, 13.

41. *The Mystery of the Synagogue*, 258. Though Blackburn does note that this is “but one strand” of Cyril’s interpretation of the Pentateuch (p.265).

42. Mark Elliott, “What Cyril of Alexandria’s *De Adoratione* is All About,” *Studia Patristica* 50 (Leuven: Peeters, 2011): 245-52. Elliott summarizes Cyril’s interpretation in the treatise under the following three headings: “1. The OT is preparatory and as such indispensable historically and noetically”; “2. Properly understood the laws inform the Church of how Christ is received”; “3. Universal messages from small details.” Elliott’s reading of *De adoratione* stands closer to some older interpretations of the text. G. Jouassard once wrote “Le *De adoratione* est un exposé de morale générale, exposé à base dogmatique, mais présenté dans le cadre d’une explication spirituelle du culte mosaïque” (*L’activité littéraire de saint Cyrille d’Alexandrie jusqu’à 428: Essai de chronologie et de synthèse*, in *Mélanges E. Podechard* (Lyon: Facultés Catholiques, 1945), 161). Similarly, Joseph Kopallik stated “Der Zweck desselben ist - wie schon erwähnt - die Darstellung der vorbildlichen Bedeutung des alten Testaments, insoferne durch dasselbe die »Anbetung Gottes im Geiste und in der Wahrheit« angebahnt wurde - ein Gottesdienst, welcher erst im neuen Bunde seine Vollendung erreicht hat” (*Cyrrillus von Alexandrien*, 328).

43. Cyril, *ador.* I (PG 68.137). καὶ τῆς νομικῆς πολιτείας οὐ σφόδρα διωκισμένην τὴν ἐν Χριστῷ ζωὴν, εἰ πρὸς θεωρίαν ἄγοιτο τὴν πνευματικὴν τὰ τοῖς ἀρχαίοις διωρισμένα.

44. “What Cyril of Alexandria’s *De Adoratione* is All About,” 251-2.

This preface to *De adoratione* lends further weight to Elliott’s contention and proves that a monastic context is the correct one for this treatise. Notably absent is any explicit reference to the Jews or to the insufficiency of a merely literal reading of the Mosaic Law. Instead, Cyril asserts that his audience consists of those who “have chosen to live their life in the most excellent way,” and that for such persons he intends to provide “moral guidance” (ἡθικὴν ὑφήγησιν), a phrase that the Syriac translates as “an account about the spiritual manner of life” (ܠܡܥܢ ܕܥܬܝܕܢ ܕܠܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܢܚܝܬܐ). In a similar passage from his *Glaphyra*, noted by de Durand, Cyril refers back to his earlier treatise, *De adoratione*, and describes it as an “moral exhortation” (τὴν ἡθικὴν παραίνεσιν), recalling the phrase from this recently discovered preface.<sup>45</sup> Language similar to that found in the preface also occurs in the twelfth homily from Cyril’s series on the Gospel of Luke which survives in Greek and Syriac recensions. In this homily which treats the fasting of Christ in the wilderness (cf. Luke 4:2), the archbishop presents this act as a “type” intended to make clear to humanity that to “dwell in the desert” is “useful and necessary for salvation.” Thus, by going into the desert Christ was “establishing a pattern for us of the extraordinary and more admirable way of life” (εἰκόνα ποιούμενος τῆς παρ’ ἡμῶν ἐξαιρέτου καὶ θαυμασμένης ζωῆς).<sup>46</sup> The phrase *τεθαυμασμένης ζωῆς* here recalls the mention of τὴν εἰς πᾶν ὁτιοῦν τῶν τεθαυμασμένων τρίβον. Though there is little question in the surviving Greek fragment of this homily that monasticism is in view, the Syriac translation makes this explicit. Just following the line cited above, the Syriac adds, “I mean, [the life] of the holy monks” (ܠܐ ܕܥܬܝܕܢ ܕܠܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܢܚܝܬܐ).<sup>47</sup> Since this line is absent from the Greek catena fragment of this passage, it might have been a later addition by a Syriac translator or scribe. Alternatively, the usage of the first person (“I mean”) argues for its originality. In either case, the monastic intent of the homily is clear enough, and the usage of similar vocabulary in the preface to *De adoratione* suggests the same for this exegetical treatise on the Old Testament.

All of these passages emphasize the centrality of moral advice to the *De adoratione* and suggest a different context for interpreting the treatise than that put forward by Wilken and others. While it is true that in the preface Cyril states his intention to “unfold the shadow of

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45. Cyril, *glaph.* Ex. I (PG 69.385). Cf. De Durand, “Un prologue inédit,” 5.

46. Cyril, fr. Lc. 25 (Joseph Reuss, *Lukas-Kommentare aus der griechischen Kirche*, Texte und Untersuchungen 130 (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1984), 65).

47. I.-B. Chabot, *S. Cyrilli Alexandrini Commentarii in Lucam*, Pars Prior, CSCO 70 (Paris: E Typographeo Reipublicae, 1912), 33.

the law,” this manner of exposition is but the vehicle for the kind of ethical guidance that he intends to present. Of course it would be unrealistic to suppose that the presence of a Jewish community in Alexandria had absolutely no effect upon Cyril’s exegesis of the Old Testament, and the insufficiency of a merely literal reading of the Pentateuch is undoubtedly assumed throughout his work. Nevertheless, regarding the question of what is primarily at stake in the treatise, it would seem that Cyril is more concerned with providing a blueprint or roadmap for Christian virtue than he is with polemicizing against Jewish interpreters haggling Christians in fifth-century Alexandria. In other words, rather than seeing *De adoratione* as a deconstructive project attempting to bring to light the errors of the Jewish *πολιτεία*, as Wilken proposes, we should instead see it as a primarily constructive project: an ambitious attempt to articulate a new *εὐαγγελικὴ πολιτεία* using the same five books that formed the basis of Israel’s life as a nation long ago.<sup>48</sup> Given the intended ascetic audience of the work, we may surmise that Cyril thought this Christian manner of life was most closely approximated by the monks who, in the words of Athanasius, “made the desert a city” by “going out from their own people and registering themselves for *τὴν ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς πολιτείαν*.”<sup>49</sup>

In addition, this preface aids us in situating *De adoratione* within the broader scope of Cyril’s corpus. Cyril’s modern commentators have often noted that the treatise differs from his other works. Unlike his commentaries on Isaiah or the Twelve Prophets, *De adoratione* is not a verse-by-verse exposition of the biblical text. The *Glaphyra*, which also deals with the Pentateuch, does not strictly proceed verse-by-verse, but nevertheless does follow the order of books in the Pentateuch as well as the order of select passages within each book. Thus, *De adoratione* stands along among Cyril’s so-called “exegetical” works with its thematic arrangement and dialogical format.<sup>50</sup> Moreover, the exegetical method followed in *De adoratione* differs from these other works. In the preface to *Glaphyra*, wherein Cyril explicitly refers to his earlier work *De adoratione*, he states his intention to explain each passage both “historically” (*ἱστορικῶς*) and in

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48. Wilken, *Judaism and the Early Christian Mind*, 75-76, says that Cyril’s usage of the term *πολιτεία* “call[s] attention to differences between Judaism and Christianity.” While Wilken’s assertion may be correct, he fails to capture the full significance of the term. Schurig, *Die Theologie des Kreuzes*, 273-75, is more on target when he says the word is “der Leitbegriff seiner theologischen Ethik und beschreibt das Leben eines auf Christus hin gestalteten und erneuerten Menschen.”

49. Athanasius, *Vita Antonii* 14.7. The term *πολιτεία* also occurs at *Vita Antonii* proem.2; 7.13; 46.7.

50. So also Robert L. Wilken, “Cyril of Alexandria, Biblical Exegete,” in *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis*, ed. Charles Kannengiesser, *The Bible in Ancient Christianity 1* (Leiden: Boston, 2006), 840-1; Young, *From Nicaea to Chalcedon*, 304-5.

light of the “mystery of Christ.”<sup>51</sup> The commentaries on the prophets exhibit a similar twofold exegetical approach. However, in *De adoratione* Cyril seems much less interested in the historical details of the text, perhaps due to the fact that he was more singularly concerned with providing an overall outline of the ascetic vocation than he was with composing a formal, scholarly commentary on the biblical text.

Nevertheless, although *De adoratione* may fit awkwardly into the genre of Cyril’s other exegetical works, the mode of exegesis employed in it is not out of step with his understanding of Scripture’s purpose. In his estimation, Scripture provides a “twofold form of instruction” (τὴν διφυᾶ παιδευσιν), one that is “both moral and dogmatic” (ἡθικὴν τε καὶ δογματικὴν).<sup>52</sup> Cyril’s modern commentators have often remarked upon his statement at the outset of his monumental *Commentary on the Gospel of John* that he intends to provide therein “a more dogmatic exegesis” (δογματικωτέραν . . . ἐξήγησιν).<sup>53</sup> Indeed, although he at times wanders into the territory of moral exposition, there is no question that the bulk of his Johannine commentary is taken up with providing an exposition and defense of pro-Nicene Trinitarian theology, **what he presumably took to be “dogmatic exegesis.”** Viewed in light of Cyril’s contention that Scripture provides a “twofold form of instruction”, the preface to *De adoratione* suggests that the treatise should be read as a complement to the Johannine commentary. Although in it he occasionally engages in some Christological or Trinitarian reflection, his primary focus resides on the moral guidance that may be obtained from Scripture. In other words, Cyril, so long remembered either as a dogmatic theologian or as a power-hungry cleric, deserves more attention as a bishop attempting to provide pastoral guidance to the Christian community under his care.

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51. *glaph.* Gen. I (PG 69.16).

52. Cyril, Mich. 7:14-15 (Pusey, in *XII Prophetas*, 2.732-33); In *Joannem* 21:25 (Pusey, In *D. Ioannis Evangelium*, 3.170-71).

53. In *Joannem*, praef. (Pusey, In *D. Ioannis Evangelium*, 1.7). Cf. Frances Young, “The ‘Mind’ of Scripture: Theological Readings of the Bible in the Fathers,” *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 7 (2005), 131ff; *ibid.*, *From Nicaea to Chalcedon*, 311; Lois M. Farag, *St. Cyril of Alexandria, A New Testament Exegete: His Commentary on the Gospel of John* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2007), 71.